

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

Claim 22 (previously presented): A process for packaging a product, comprising the steps of:

(A) placing a first product into a flexible, heat-shrinkable bag, the bag having an open top, whereby a first bagged product having excess bag length results, and wherein the bag comprises a heat-shrinkable multilayer film comprising:

- (1) a first layer, which is an inside bag layer, and which comprises polyolefin;
- (2) a second layer comprising at least one member selected from the group consisting of polyolefin, polystyrene, and polyurethane;
- (3) a third layer comprising at least one member selected from the group consisting of amorphous polyester and polyester having a melting point of from about 130°C to about 260°C; and
- (4) a fourth layer, which is an outside bag layer, the fourth layer comprising at least one member selected from the group consisting of polyester, polyamide, polypropylene and polyurethane; and

wherein the bag is produced by sealing the first layer to itself, whereby the first layer is an inside bag layer and the fourth layer is an outside bag layer;

(B) repeating the placing step with a second product and a second bag, whereby a second bagged product results;

(C) stacking at least the first and second bagged products so that the excess bag length of each of the bagged products are on top of one another and within a sealing distance of a means for heat-sealing;

(D) heat-sealing the inside layer of first bag to itself in the region between the open end of the first bag and the product, and the inside layer of the second bag to itself in the region between the open end of the second bag and the product, so that the first product is completely sealed within the first bag and the second product is completely sealed within the second bag, the sealing being carried out at a temperature so that the resulting packaged products can be freely separated from one another without layer delamination.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the second layer has a thickness of from about 5 to about 50%, based on the thickness of the heat-shrinkable multilayer film.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the heat-shrinkable film further comprises a fifth layer which serves as an O₂-barrier layer, the fifth layer comprising at least one member selected from the group consisting of EVOH, PVDC, polyalkylene carbonate, polyamide, and polyethylene naphthalate.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the process is carried out in a rotary chamber vacuum machine.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 25, wherein 2 bagged products are stacked on top of one another during heat-sealing.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein from 2 to 5 bagged products are stacked on top of one another during heat-sealing.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, further comprising evacuating the first and second bags after they are stacked but before they are sealed.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the first bag and the second bag are made from films having the same multilayer structure and composition.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the film has a total free shrink, at 185°F, of from about 40 to 170 percent.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the third layer comprises an amorphous polyester and the fourth layer comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of amorphous polyester and polyester having a melting point of from about 130°C to about 260°C.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the fourth layer comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of amorphous polyamide and polyamide having a melting point of from about 130°C to about 260°C.

Claim 33 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the fourth layer comprises a polyester having from about 70 to 95 mole percent terephthalate mer units.

Claim 34 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the film has a gloss of at least 50 percent, as measured against the fourth layer by ASTM D2457.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the film has a total thickness of from about 1 to about 5 mils.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 35, wherein the film has a total thickness of from about 1.5 to about 3 mils.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the film further comprises a fifth layer which serves as an O₂-barrier layer and which is between the third layer and the fourth layer, the fifth layer comprising at least one member selected from the group consisting of EVOH, PVDC, polyalkylene carbonate, polyamide, and polyethylene naphthalate.

Claim 38 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 37, further comprising a sixth layer which comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of polyester and polyamide, the sixth layer being between the fourth layer and the fifth layer.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 37, wherein the first layer comprises ethylene/alpha-olefin copolymer; the second layer comprises ethylene/vinyl acetate copolymer; the third layer comprises polyethylene terephthalate; the fourth layer comprises polyethylene terephthalate; and, the fifth layer comprises EVOH.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 37, wherein, based on total film thickness, the first layer has a thickness of from about 1 to 60 percent, the second layer has a thickness of from about 1 to 50 percent, the third layer has a thickness of from about 5 to 40 percent, the fourth layer has a thickness of from about 1 to 40 percent, and, the fifth layer has a thickness of from about 1 to 20 percent.

Claim 41 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the first layer comprises a blend of homogeneous ethylene/alpha-olefin copolymer and heterogeneous ethylene/alpha-olefin copolymer.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the film comprises a crosslinked polymer network.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the film has a total free shrink, at 185°F, of from about 60 to 150 percent; an impact strength of at least 60 Newtons, as measured by ASTM D3763; a gloss of at least 50 percent, as measured by ASTM D2457; and a haze of less than 10%, as measured by ASTM D1003.

Claim 44 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 22, wherein the first layer, consists essentially of at least one member selected from the group consisting of ethylene homopolymer, ethylene copolymer, propylene homopolymer, propylene copolymer, butene homopolymer, butene copolymer, polystyrene, polyamide, polyester, polyurethane, and starch-containing polymer.

Claim 45 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 44, wherein the first layer consists essentially of at least one member selected from the group comprising ethylene/alpha-olefin copolymer, ethylene/unsaturated ester copolymer, ethylene/unsaturated acid copolymer.

Claim 46 (previously presented): The process according to Claim 45, wherein the first layer consists essentially of homogeneous ethylene/alpha-olefin copolymer.

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Claim 47 (new): The process according to Claim 22, wherein:

the third layer of the multilayer film comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of amorphous polyester and polyester having a melting point of from about 130°C to less than 190°C; and

the fourth layer of the multilayer film comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of polyester having a melting point of at least 190°C, polyamide, and polyurethane.

Claim 48 (new): The process according to Claim 47, wherein the multilayer film further comprises a fifth layer which serves as an O₂-barrier layer and which is between the third layer and the fourth layer, the fifth layer comprising EVOH.

Claim 49 (new): The process according to Claim 48, wherein the multilayer film further comprises a sixth layer which comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of amorphous polyester and polyester having a melting point of from about 130°C to less than 190°C, the sixth layer being between the fourth layer and the fifth layer.

Claim 50 (new): The process according to Claim 48, wherein the fourth layer comprises the polyester having a melting point of at least 190°C.

Claim 51 (new): The process according to Claim 49, wherein the fourth layer comprises the polyester having a melting point of at least 190°C.